The Quest

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The Quest

by TigerPrawn

Summary

As the Saxons bear down on the wall, Merlin charges the knights with a quest. Tristan and Galahad are to retrieve the Grail and save them all against the Saxon threat.

Notes

Posting for RareMeat Tristhad Week and Fandom Trumps Hate.
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See the end of the work for more notes

Chapter 1

Galahad still felt the warmth of the fires on his face.

The ones they had burned at Dagonet's grave.

The coolness of the stable in which he had finally sank down to his ass with a cold jug of water, was welcome.

They had been drinking and pouring libation in equal measure but the alcohol had gone from a pleasant heat in his chest to a throb in Galahad's head. Just as it had before this mission. All in the space of time it had taken for Arthur to deliver the news that they would not be free until after this one last mission. A mission to the North to rescue a Roman family, in which they would surely all be killed by the Saxons or the Woads. Their numbers were too few that their combined skills would not protect them from the hoards despite their prowess.

And he had been right. Perhaps he should feel grateful that only one amongst his brothers at arms had died.

So far.

The Saxons were still coming, even if the Woads seem to have forged some sort of truce with Arthur in the face of the threat.

Galahad gripped his papers in his hand, papers for safe conduct throughout the Roman Empire. Back to a home he had longed for in his heart and soul, despite so few memories of it. But the Saxons were still coming and all that consumed Galahad's mind was the conversation between his brothers the day they rescued the Roman Bishop that held their fate.

"Why don't you just kill him, and then discharge yourself after?" Bors had challenged him with a smile.

"I don't kill for pleasure, unlike some." He had answered back then.

"Well, you should try it someday. You might get a taste for it." Tristan had replied, and Galahad had denied that it was, as his brothers claimed, part of him. In his blood.

He remembered his own words and they made him want to weep.

"As of tomorrow this was all just a bad memory."

How wrong he had been.

The darkness was drawing in and the Saxons were less than a day away. They would leave or they would stay.

They *should* leave. They could go home now.

Home.

"Arthur wants us," Tristan stood over him, kicking at his foot to get Galahad's attention. Always able to sneak up on him, such a good tracker. Such a sneak.

Galahad looked up and hated that even now, even amongst all this and after all these years, his heart missed a beat at the sight. His traitorous heart that had tried to convince him many times as far back as this adolescent crush went, that his home wasn't the land of his birth, but anywhere that Tristan was.

Galahad closed his eyes with a sigh, pushing those feelings back inside. The ones that had been selfishly glad it hadn't been Tristan they had buried that day. The ones that made him wonder how Verona might have felt if it had been Bors they had buried.

Tristan hadn't stayed to say more, when Galahad opened his eyes again he only saw the man's retreating back as he went towards the barracks.

With a heavy sigh Galahad rose and followed.

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Galahad paused when he entered the room. Tristan did not.

The older man was very much better at hiding all of his emotions, including shock, than any of the knights. But certainly much better than Galahad, who had to begrudgingly admit that perhaps the others were right when they said it was a sign of his youth.

He tried to hide his surprise, but it registered with Arthur he was sure.

Tristan came to a stop next to the round table and Galahad did the same, waiting to be spoken to. Tristan, he knew, was not too shy to question Arthur in anything, but he would wait to hear it all first. And so they waited for Arthur to explain why the Woad known as Merlin, sat with him at their table.

Some called him a dark magician and certainly there was a mysticism to his people. But above all, as far as Galahad was concerned, they were savage warriors who time and again had breached their walls in violent raids.

“We have a common enemy,” Arthur spoke the words almost as a command, and Galahad understood it as an explanation.

“Arthur Castus leads you well, Rome is leaving. The Saxon is come. The world we have known
and fought for is ended. Now we must make a new world.” Merlin spoke eloquently and in such a way as marked him as a charismatic leader of his own people.

There was silence for a few beats, broken only by a soft sniff from Tristan, that Galahad knew usually preceded a sneer. Though he likely kept that from his face.

“Rome was my enemy, not Arthur. Not you. We have no fight between us now.” Merlin continued, though Galahad was confused as to why this man was here and saying these words to the two of them.

Arthur clearly read his expression and cleared his throat, “We are to join our forces. Fight the Saxons. I will speak to you all later and tell you that it is your choice. You’re freemen.”

Arthur let out a sigh and shook his head, frustrated. “I mean it. I wish for you to leave, but Merlin has asked something of us that might turn the tables, save *everyone* from the Saxons. A legend that may hold some truth.”

“We can save them with arrows and swords.” Tristan countered, looking between Arthur and the Woad. “What use have we of his strange tales?”

“Should I consider your faith in your gods as strange tales?” Arthur replied, raising his brow.

“What is it you ask of us?” Galahad addressed Merlin directly.

“There is a legend amongst my people, a stone. They call it the Grail. It brings abundance and will unite our strength in the fight against the Saxons. It is in the keep of a chieftain known as the Fisher King.”

“We wish for it to be retrieved.” Arthur added.

“We?” Tristan questioned, abrupt tone.

“For the Woads to be invested in this, it must be our knights that retrieve it, to show good faith.”

Tristan blew out a breath and shook his head. Galahad knew this reaction didn’t necessarily mean that Tristan would not do it, even now he was free. Because Galahad knew the man's loyalty to Arthur was as strong as his own.

“When do we leave?” Galahad asked, drawing a sharp look from Tristan over his shoulder.

“I cannot ask you to do this-” Arthur started.

“And yet you do.” Tristan cut him off with a growl. “And you know we will follow you, freedom or no.”

“We leave immediately?” Galahad said, realising that it had to be the case.

Arthur nodded, “Time is of the essence.”

“I will gather supplies,” Merlin commented, standing and moving passed them towards the door. “I have a map.”

Tristan waited until the Woad closed the door behind him before turning back to Arthur. “Why us?”

“I cannot commit more than two. Not on a myth, even if it is worth exploring. You both, in your own ways are the most cynical about the Woads and their traditions. I need you to keep that cynicism about you and know when to turn back should this be a fool’s errand.”

Tristan huffed in a way that spoke of how he already considered this a *fool’s errand*, but he pulled the papers from his tunic nonetheless. He laid them at his place setting on the table and looked at Arthur.

“I will leave this here safely until my return.”

Arthur nodded and Tristan turned on his heel, striding past Galahad and out of the door without giving the younger knight a second glance.

“Go, prepare. Merlin will give you everything you need.” Arthur spoke quietly, humble.

Galahad took a breath and pulled out his own papers, hesitating only a moment before putting them at his own setting and giving Arthur a nod before leaving the room.

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“Are we fools?” Galahad asked. They had set off in silence in the dead of night, following a map dyed into a piece of hyde. They rode in the opposite direction to the fight that bore down upon their brothers.

Tristan gave Galahad a sideways glance and a raised brow. He turned his eyes back to the path their horses carely tread though the woods, before answering.

“Someone has to be.”

Galahad frowned and let the silence resume. He was never sure if Tristan was mocking him. It was very difficult to tell from the ten words the man might speak to him every week.

They had been close when they were younger. Tristan had looked out for Galahad and Gawain, as the youngsters of the group. He had taught them how to swordfight.

Galahad had been a good student, and he had enjoyed the time they’d spent together. Enjoyed it too much, he knew. And one day that became clear to Tristan and the friendliness went cold between them. Tristan continued to train he and Gawain, but the pride and affection that had been there was gone. And in the end, it was insufferable to be near the older boy who clearly disdained him. In the end, Galahad took up the bow and stopped training with Tristan altogether.

The memory renewed the empty feeling in Galahad’s chest that had been there since adolescence.

Galahad wasn’t sure if he imagined the tension that then settled over them, but he felt it nonetheless. Real or imagined, there was always something between them that made him ache.

They had travelled a little further on when Tristan spontaneously spoke again, startling Galahad a little.

“Cynical of their ways or not, I’d much prefer to be facing the Saxons with my brothers.” Tristan snarled the words and Galahad realised he must have been mulling them over for a while. And he could understand it.

Duty drove them both to do as Arthur had asked, but to do so was also a mark against honour.

“All the more reason to go quickly and rejoin the fight.” Galahad tried to give comfort, but when Tristan replied with no more than a grunt, he couldn't help but be petulant. “I know you are desperate and impatient to face death.”

Tristan looked over at him, and Galahad had expected a frown, but instead there was some amusement there. Tristan looked ahead once more as he replied, “I've always found the idea of death comforting. The thought that my life could end at any moment frees me to fully appreciate the beauty, and art, and horror of everything this world has to offer.”

Galahad blinked at the unexpected response and the glimpse into Tristan's thoughts. He rarely shared them freely and certainly not with him since they were children.

It silenced him. He had no idea how to respond to Tristan speaking of art and beauty. Speaking softly as he usually only did with his bird.

They travelled on in silence, and Galahad was entirely convinced that Tristan was amused by it.

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Night had rolled over them and the sky was beginning to lighten once more when they reached the edge of the glade in which they would apparently find the Fisher King and the Grail.

Tristan pulled his horse up first and Galahad did the same, feeling like a child with it just being the two of them. Something that had been rare over the years, but every time they were alone together, Galahad felt like a silly and ridiculous boy who should have better hid his feelings.

He hated that Tristan made him feel that way, hated even more that the air felt tense between them after hours of silence and now they must carry out the quest that had been set to them.

"Through there." Tristan broke the silence to point the way. A path that only a tracker such as himself would find. Galahad nodded and followed and Tristan urged his horse on.

The path was heavily wooded at first, but then the trees thinned and the way became clear. A small and long abandoned settlement of broken down stone structures alongside a river. One building, a small tower though nothing so grand as the Romans built, looked the most intact. It was hard to tell from the state of it, whether it was at all inhabited.

Could it be that they had come here for nothing?

Tristan stopped and Galahad had to pull the reins quickly to ensure his horse didn't continue.

"We should leave the horses here," Tristan commented quietly, though he didn't wait for a response before dismounting, a clear expectation that Galahad would do the same.

And though it was with a huff, he did.

They tied their horses to a sturdy tree and continued forward, cautious and hands on weapons but none drawn.

"This place looks like no one has lived here for years." Galahad commented.

Tristan shook his head in disagreement, but said nothing. An expert tracker that knew no equal amongst Arthur's men or the Romans, he could see everything that Galahad couldn't. Galahad frowned and dropped back a little, actively bringing up the rear in case they were set upon.

When Tristan stopped suddenly, Galahad followed suit. He stopped breathing, remaining utterly silent as Tristan seemed to narrow in on something.

A moment later, Tristan signalled with his fingers and took off, a fast but near silent pace to the castle wall. As they drew closer Galahad could hear what Tristan already had. They both lowered themselves against the river's embankment and watched as a lame man pulled ashore a small fishing boat before reaching in for his catch.

"Cover," Tristan told Galahad before he pulled himself over the bank and drew his sword, approaching the man as Galahad armed himself with his bow and arrow, ready to skewer the man through the heart if he became a threat.

"We're looking for the Grail." Tristan said, making the man jump. He dropped the fish back into the boat and then stumbled backwards in the shallows. His leg deformed by injury, had him unable to keep his balance and went down.

Despite the initial startle, the man did not appear remotely afraid. In fact he smiled up at them, all the more so when he saw Galahad.

Bow still raised, he stepped over the bank and towards Tristan and the wounded chieftain.

"You're the Fisher King?" Galahad pressed as he drew closer.

The man nodded, "Now I am, I suppose. Once I was just a king."

The amusement in his tone made Galahad wonder if he was quite sane.

"Do you have the Grail?" Galahad asked, feeling the tension practically vibrating beneath Tristan's cool exterior, as though he spoiled for a fight.

Galahad resisted the urge to lower his bow and place a gentle hand on Tristan's sword arm.

The King looked between them and his mouth twitched into a smile.

"I do. I am the last in a long line of keepers of the Grail. Trusted to keep it from being used for ill."

"But it can be used for good?" Galahad asked.

"Good, evil. They are dependent on context. Do you believe the Romans are good?"

When neither replied, and Galahad didn't need to look to see that Tristan had for once not managed to school his expression, the man laughed.

He started to get to his feet and Galahad stowed his bow and moved to help him, but was waved off.

"Let me look at you both." He studied them for a moment, a long hard look at Tristan before turning to Galahad. "No one may even touch it unless they are pure. It can bring such plenty,

crops and life in abundance. It would have saved my people, my land, had I just had the purity to use it."

The chieftain's tone was not sad, not contemplative. Instead a little amused and Galahad felt even more that the man was unhinged.

"You're here alone." Tristan said, no need for it to be a question. More so a reminder that they were a greater number and armed.

"But I'm very hospitable." The chieftain joked back.

Tristan sucked air through his teeth in an impatient gesture.

"You want to take the Grail." The chieftain eyed them, his amusement growing. "Yes, and you might." He said looking at Galahad. "What are your names?"

"Galahad," Galahad replied and then indicated Tristan, "And Tristan. We are Sarmatian Knights under the command of Arthur Castus-"

The chieftain waved his hand to indicate Galahad stop. "I don't care much for titles these days. You seek the Grail to best an enemy, or unite a people. Which is it?"

"Can't it be both?" tristan growled, which earned him something of an amused glare.

Before another word was uttered, Galahad interjected, "To unite a people and save them from an enemy who would rape and murder them to the last."

"Galahad," The chieftain mused, as though tasting the name in his mouth. "Not a Roman name, nor a Briton. Galahad the Pure."

"Pure," Tristan huffed, his impatience breaking through.

Galahad felt a pang of hurt. So little Tristan thought of him.

"Pure of heart," The chieftain replied, moving forward and placing his hand on Galahad's chest and nodding. "Yes, one of the purest. Come."

The Fisher King began to limp towards the castle doors that faced the river, turning to raise a hand to Tristan, "You wait here."

Tristan grumbled and looked desperately at Galahad for a moment. So desperately that Galahad almost thought he might actually care about his well being.

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Inside the building, the stone was roughly hewn and crumbling down in places. But Galahad didn't hesitate in following the chieftain as he led the way through. It was lit with slitted windows and a few torches, nothing quite as grand as the Romans had built.

The man finally stopped before a heavy wooden door, turned and fixed Galahad with an intense stare.

“Are you entirely pure, Galahad? Is your heart pure?”

Galahad’s jaw tightened and he took a breath, wondering how to answer that. Finally he replied, “Yes. In my heart. My hands have shed blood only when necessary. I have loved occasionally. But in my heart-”

The man cackled and nodded his head and waved a dismissive hand, “That’ll do boy. You exude purity, you might as well be a puppy.”

Galahad might have taken exception to that, not least because it was the sort of tease Tristan might throw at him. But then the man turned away and began to heave open the large door.

It took Galahad’s eyes a moment to adjust to the treasure within.

High windows let in the morning light, and it shone off every surface. Gold and silver, rubies and other polished stones. A trove the Romans or the Saxons would steal in a heartbeat and miss the most valuable piece of all.

The grey stone, polished as though by a lifetime submerged in water, sat nestled on a table full of precious objects. It stood out as though calling to him, seeming to bounce off all the light reflected upon it by the surrounding treasures.

As Galahad went to step forward, the chieftain blocked his way.

“You must prove yourself worthy.”

“How?” Galahad frowned, looking past the man to his mission’s end.

“There is only one way. Pick it up, Galahad. And then we will know how pure you are.” A chuckle echoed around the chamber.

“And if I’m not pure?”

The Fisher King shrugged. “It will drive you mad with its visions.”

There was a solemness to that answer that seemed to explain exactly why this man was now how he was. He shifted listlessly before finally moving to the side and letting Galahad forward.

Galahad drew in and then released a slow, deep breath.

He reached forward and placed his hand on the stone, his fingers curling around it and-

The bright light knocked Galahad back. He felt his back hit the ground but he could see nothing but light, until he could see more. *Feel* more.

Not his life lived flashing before his eyes, but the one he was yet to live. He saw it all.

He took the stone as the building collapsed around him, returning to Arthur, defeating the Saxons. Transforming the lands just north of the wall into a fruitful paradise where he and Tristan, Bors and his family, Arthur and Guinevere lived with the people. He saw them grow happy and old. He saw life pass them all by and then-

"Hannibal," The name was moaned as their bodies moved together. He and Tristan.

No, not them. But them all the same. Not just a likeness but the same souls shining through. Having found each other again after death. Alive again as other people and-

Galahad shuddered and moaned, feeling the sensations of Hannibal, or Tristan, moving inside him. Their bodies rocked together as the other man gasped, "Will…"

Galahad's eyes flew open and darkness surrounded him.

It took a moment for his eyes to adjust, to realise the light was blocked by the Fisher King standing over him. Looming with a look of anger and frustration.

"What did you see?" He demanded.

"I…" Galahad tried to focus, tried to sit but the man pushed him back down with his foot and kept it against his chest.

"What did you see?" He spat.

"Happiness." Galahad finally choked out the word.

The Fisher King let out a roar of anger. His eyes were blazing with madness. His mouth slack as he growled and snarled at Galahad.

"Why not me!" He screamed into the room, the only answer was his echo. "Every time no happiness, just more and more of the same. Of death and horror. You drive me mad."

He was screaming up into the room, his hands clutching and pulling his hair from the roots.

Galahad used the distraction to push the man's foot away. His body felt heavy, as though he had been through a gauntlet. It was a struggle to get to his feet, able to push the man off and into a pile of golden cups.

Galahad staggered forward, towards the door, as he shoved the stone into the pouch at his waist. But the Fisher King was suddenly behind him, trying to drag him back. He threw him off again, but this time as he moved forward, something caught his eye.

By the time Galahad turned, it was too late to stop the man swinging an ornate iron axe at a frail length of rope that snaked up the wall. Whatever that led to, Galahad was sure he didn't want to know.

But it was too late to outrun what the Fisher King had set in motion.

The axe struck the rope, the rope unravelled and then snapped and a great wrought and spiked gate fell down in front of the door, blocking the way.

Galahad pulled up short, panting and looking around for another escape. If he could climb up some of the treasure he could make it to a window.

Before he could make a move, the ground began to rumble.

“Galahad!” He heard Tristan call from outside. “Galahad!”

His cries were drowned out by the noise of the stone moving. The Fisher King looked stricken, paralysed with terror as the stone began to crumble all around them. The noise made it clear the entire building was shaking apart.

Galahad didn’t hesitate any longer, he ran towards the treasure. It was all beginning to scatter and spill, but Galahad was able to hoist himself onto the table and start to climb the long, sumptuous drape that looked like it might have been stolen from Rome itself.

It began to tear from the wall and Galahad was sure he wouldn’t reach the window. But then the window reached him.

As he clung to the fabric, the stones began to loosen and collapse until a gaping hole began to spread from where the window had been.

Galahad closed his eyes for a moment, a silent prayer to the gods that the Romans called pagan. And then he jumped.

Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

visions and new versions of reality

Bodies moved together on a bed of fur.

His quarters, Galahad realised. And one of the bodies was his own, that was clear. Naked and writhing as he had many a night with one of the local women. But this wasn't a woman he tussled with now.

Galahad let out a groan as a strong, muscular arm moved over him, a large hand sliding up his sweat slicked skin. Over his chest, up to his jaw. The hand took hold and turned his face into a kiss.

Their lips pressed together and Galahad's entire view was filled with Tristan's face. His eyes full of lust and his lips moving tenderly as he pulled Galahad hard against his own body.

Galahad woke with a gasp to find himself rested against a tree, Tristan at his side. The stone on the floor between them, as though it had been in his hand and rolled onto the ground. He must have reached for it whilst sleeping.

Galahad panted, his cheeks heating as the dream lingered. It took a moment for him to calm, and in that time Tristan was inspecting a wound on Galahad's shin and thankfully had not noticed.

They were both covered in dust and small remnants of debris. Galahad felt as though his horse had collapsed on him, struggling a little to breath even once he had recovered from the dream. He tried to sit up, at which point Tristan realised he was awake.

"Rest," Tristan commanded, putting a gentle hand on his shoulder.

"Something hit me," Galahad recalled and Tristan nodded.

"Part of the masonry, it struck you in the chest but thankfully did not crush you when you fell."

Galahad nodded, more of it coming back to him. "It was coming down around me. How am I here?"

Tristan let out a little huff. Galahad could just make out in the dim light, the scrapes and bruises, the tear in his tunic. "I was able to pull you out before the whole thing came down." Tristan muttered the words into the darkness, not meeting Galahad's eye.

“Thank you.” Galahad replied gently, resisting the urge to reach a hand out to touch the scrape down the side of Tristan’s face.

Tristan grunted dismissively and then replied, “Rest, the horses broke loose in panic and I have found only my horse. She can carry us both as soon as you are well enough to travel.”

“No, there is no time to waste.” Galahad started then groaned with the pain in his ribs as he tried to sit further up. “Tristan go, take the Grail. The Saxons will already be bearing down on the wall.” He pushed against the knight, but didn’t even cause the slightest shift. The effort tiring him.

“We don’t leave each other behind. Arthur will understand that.” Tristan growled.

Galahad shook his head. “It’s not about what he will understand, it’s about what needs to be done. What use is any of this if the Saxons invade before we get this back.” Galahad took the stone from the ground and held it up, “This is worth more than our promise to each other, more than my life if it works.”

Tristan’s jaw tightened and he looked for a moment like he might argue that point.

“I won’t leave you,” Tristan replied firmly.

Galahad grit his teeth, feeling the warmth of the stone in his hand and knowing that this all had to be worth something more.

“Don’t pretend you care for me more than any of our other brothers, and you know you would leave them if you must. If you had to for the mission, whether you believed in the mission or not. You’re honourable like that.” Galahad pushed, trying to make Tristan see reason.

Tristan looked away and drew a deep breath, visibly shaking as he let it out.

Galahad frowned wondering whether the shuddering was anger or frustration.

“I won’t leave you.” Tristan repeated, quietly.

Galahad shook his head and scoffed. “Why not? There’s no love lost between us Tristan. You can’t stand me. You’ve hated me since we were children. Since you realised that I…” The words trailed off as Galahad realised what he was saying, the accidental truth that escaped from him in his frustration.

Tristan scowled, “You stopped training with me the moment you realised I had feelings for you that were beyond brothers at arms.” Tristan countered, angrily.

The words baffled Galahad and he shook his head, frowning. His stomach dropped and swooped, his heart pounded, wondering whether he’d heard those words right or not. He felt like he was his teenage self again.

“What are you talking about? When you realised my childish interest, you stopped speaking with me. Stopped treating me as you had, even as a friend. I was nothing to you and I

couldn't bear it. That was why I stopped training with you, why I took up the bow so that we wouldn't have t-"

"That isn't what happened." Tristan snapped, his anger palpable. Even on the battlefield Tristan was calm and collected, even if there was rage beneath the surface. The outburst startled Galahad.

"Perhaps our perspectives differ, because that was mine. *Is* mine. You made it clear that the knowledge of my feelings alone was enough to disgust you." Galahad snapped back, on the defensive.

"No!" Tristan growled and slammed his fist into the dirt between them. "All these years and you do not know me at all. All these years waiting. Watching whilst you drink and sing with any pretty girl who will sit in your lap."

Galahad felt his cheeks burn at the accusation, and the truth in it. His rebellion over the years of his rejection. He had bedded any woman who wanted him, because he could never really have what he wanted. *Who* he wanted.

"That is no business of yours." Galahad forced out the words, as false as they felt. It was his business, *he* had been the reason. The one who Galahad could never have.

"You made your flirtation everyone's business." Tristan spat, the look of disgust on his face wounded Galahad. "You made it my business that day in the river."

Galahad drew a sharp breath. He remembered it like yesterday, the pain of it etched on his heart.

The sun had beaten down on them on the hottest day of the year, they had trained hard and taken to the river after. A gaggle of pubescent knightlings running naked into the cooling water, hooting and hollering. And he had been unable to take his eyes off of Tristan as the older boy washed the sweat from his skin. When Tristan caught him watching, he held up the scraper, thinking that was what he wanted. So Galahad had nodded, but instead of throwing it to him, Tristan had come to him and started to scrape the sweat from Galahad's back.

That was the day Tristan had seen what Galahad had been no longer able to hide. His face had reddened as he felt the unusual stirring beneath the water in response to Tristan's touch. And when he had moved to Galahad's front, Tristan had realised it too.

That had been the end of their friendship. He had handed Galahad the scraper and taunted him. Galahad had waded from the water and grabbed his clothes, taking off into the woods without a backward glance.

He had a vague memory that as they had stood there, Tristan had spoken to him, but at the time the words had been drowned out by the panic that Galahad had never even felt when confronted by an enemy all these years later. In his mind, he interpreted those words to have been Tristan taunting him with his disgust. He couldn't remember more than that, only that the words had been cruel and that had told him everything he needed to know.

“It was only my business, you made that clear.” Galahad’s voice broke with emotion he didn’t want to show. “You looked at me differently after that. You rescinded your friendship.”

“I?” Tristan drew in a sharp breath, looking shocked and wounded. “You heard my words that day and then never spoke of it again. My coldness towards you was led by you. You didn’t want me, so I tried to make it easier for-”

“Didn’t want you?” Galahad barked out a mirthless laugh, unable to hold it back or the words he had held inside for so long. “I’ve been in love with you since the first time you allowed me to knock you down with a wooden sword to show Bors I wasn’t the child he thought I was. I’ve never stopped loving you. I’ve remained pure for you. I never… not with a man, I never…”

His words ended in a shaky sigh and a gasped sob.

There was silence for a few minutes, only the sound of the wilderness around them.

“Galahad.” Tristan’s tone defeated, exhausted. “That day in the river, I realised your response to my touch and I asked you. And you never answered me. All these years I waited for an answer.” He growled and shook his head.

When Galahad looked over at him, Tristan was getting to his feet. “Asked me what? I don’t… I was so… I didn’t hear…” He stumbled over the words. Could he have had it wrong this whole time? “I heard nothing over my own horrified embarrassment.”

Tristan huffed and shook his head, starting to pace like a wild animal. His emotions now uncaged, all those he kept inside and never let anyone see. Calm and cool to the last, even on the battlefield.

Galahad scrambled to his feet, “What did you ask?” He demanded, moving towards Tristan. “What did you ask?” He repeated as he stood in Tristan’s way, making him stop.

Tristan was shaking with rage or agony, Galahad wasn’t sure which. As he hadn’t been on that day in the river. Tristan took in a deep breath and then looked Galahad squarely in the eyes, and Galahad could see a fire there.

“I moved in front of you and discovered your secret. And I hoped you had discovered mine, and I asked you. I handed you the scraper and I asked you, was this for me or would you have reacted the same to anyone’s touch. You took the scraper and said nothing, you looked horrified and upset. I told you that if it was for me, I needn’t stop, you could give the scraper back. And then you ran. You ran off into the words as though my words had stabbed through you. I knew then that it had been nothing more than the reaction of an adolescent body and that my returned desire was unwelcome.”

Galahad clapped a hand over his mouth as he let out a strangled cry. Yes, he remembered those words now. But through his own fear and pain he had misinterpreted them as something cruel. A taunt.

“I didn’t… I didn’t understand.” Galahad muttered through his hand, shaking his head as a sense of dread and horror filled him.

Tristan clenched his jaw and looked away but made no move to walk away. “As we grew, I understood that perhaps it had simply been a reaction of your body, as our bodies reacted beyond our control at that age. I thought that one day you would realise that too and disregard my interest and we could go back to the friends we had been. But it never happened. I’ve spent years watching you pull girls into your lap as your eyes found me across the bar. You never released me from the hold you had over me, and I wasn’t strong enough to release myself.”

Galahad felt the wet of tears rolling silently down his face at the pain he could feel in Tristan. All these years thinking the man had refused him, when the opposite had been the case. How cruel it must have been for Tristan to witness over and over the way Galahad behaved.

He took in a shaky breath and sobbed out, “You’re the strongest man I know. The bravest.”

Tristan’s head hung as he shook it and muttered, “Not when it comes to you. Never when it came to you.”

“Oh gods, Tristan.” Galahad’s heart broke and he felt like he might vomit. He wanted to take the man in his arms and comfort him for all the pain he’d caused. But he knew he had no right to.

Silence fell between them, only their ragged breathing filled the air.

And then Tristan looked up at him, his face stoney cold. Tristan raised a brow, studying him for a moment, and then he stepped closer and pressed his hand to Galahad’s chest.

Galahad drew a breath at the contact, biting his lip to stop a plaintive cry of want.

“You have no pain.” Tristan remarked.

Galahad blinked and it took him a moment to realise what Tristan was referring to. And he was right, the pain in his chest was gone, the aches he had felt all over his body when he’d woken. He looked down at his shin and the fresh, deep cut there now looked as though it were a week healed.

Galahad gasped, and threw the stone from his hand without even thinking. It landed with a thud on the dirt, the slightest of glows about it, as though it were heated, and then it faded into the darkness.

Tristan knelt and felt on the ground for it with a gloved hand, picking it up once more and holding it between them to study. It was dark, but there was still some heat from it.

“It healed you.” Tristan muttered, and Galahad knew he wouldn’t have believed it had he not witnessed it from himself.

“If only it could do the same for hearts,” Galahad lamented. “Tristan I’m sorry. I never… I thought you rejected me and now I see how much pain I have caused you. I can never ask for

your forgiveness."

"You can. I might even give it." There was a slight playfulness to Tristan's words that was rarely aimed at Galahad.

He hiccuped out a laugh then shook his head.

Before he had a chance to say more, Tristan's free hand cupped his cheek, forcing their eyes to meet.

"We leave now."

Galahad nodded. But when Tristan went to pull back, he grabbed his hand and kept it held to his face. They were both breathing heavily as Galahad trailed Tristan's hand back down to his chest, then placed his own hand over Tristan's heart.

"And then we mend these."

Tristan's jaw tightened again, but the look in his eyes was no longer anger, but passion. Galahad wondered if they had time, whether Tristan would tear his clothes away right in that moment.

Instead Tristan gave a curt nod and parted them, turning to retrieve the horse.

*

The sun was almost setting as they reached the scene of the battle.

The Woads and the Sarmatians had formed a line against the Saxons who now brayed at the wall.

To Galahad and Tristan's knowing eyes, the land was covered with traps that would kill off a great number of the Saxons before they even had a chance to release a volley of arrows.

"There," Tristan pointed to where Arthur sat on his horse. Preparations were underway and the forces were about to engage.

"We must hurry," Galahad said, having to raise his voice over the noise of the gathered masses the closer they got.

They spurred their horses on and in truth, Galahad was unsure what he was to do next. They had the Grail, but how did they use it? What would it do?

The assembled fighters called out, cheering as they galloped down the line towards Arthur.

As they approached Galahad fumbled in his pouch, knowing they couldn't risk anyone else touching it, he was prepared to ride directly into the heart of the enemy forces if that was what was needed.

Arthur saw them then and cried out, their names carrying above the noise.

He could see the Woads rush forward, Merlin at their head, to meet them.

“I knew you wouldn’t fail us,” Arthur praised as they reached one another. The horses were panting but restless, as the three knights dismounted and Merlin stepped forward.

“Do not thank us too soon, we do not know what this will do.” Tristan replied.

Merlin moved forward, hands raised in praise.

“This way!” Merlin turned and led the way, directly to the graves of their fallen brothers of past years. The grave of Dagonet. “Here is where your hearts beat the strongest.”

After everything, Galahad wasn’t surprised that Tristan didn’t sneer at that. Instead he looked to the Woad.

“And now?”

“Bury it, as you would your beloved dead.” Merlin instructed, sobre but all the same his eyes were bright.

Galahad nodded and dropped to his knees before Dag’s grave. “My brother,” He muttered, digging apart the soil where, it felt a lifetime ago, they had poured libation in his honour.

Galahad pushed the stone into the ground and buried it, patting the soil and waiting.

They all waited, they knew not what for. But they waited all the same.

Minutes passed before a cry went up.

Galahad looked up at Tristan, the man looked winded as though struck. And his eyes then found Galahad’s, filled with an emotion Galahad couldn’t name.

Galahad jumped to his feet and they all turned back to their line, rushing back towards their gathered forces. At first Galahad thought that it must have been the enemy breaching the wall, but then it became clear that they were cries of wonder.

“What?” Arthur started and they pushed through to the front of the archers to look over the ground between them and the wall.

And then the Saxons broke through and cries of wonder turned to screams.

*

As the sun went down it was hard to make out the exact extent of the carnage, but to a man the Saxons were dead and dying. The further the knights picked their way through the crops that had begun to sprout up the more dead they found. There weren’t many in the crops, but beyond that, near the wall and then beyond, saplings had shot up. Fruit trees of all kinds, a bountiful orchard skewered through the Saxon hoard.

The land was indeed plentiful now, and the crops and trees still seemed to be growing. And with them other plants and vines. Other ways the earth was claiming those that had trespassed on the people that lived on these lands.

Those unscathered were easily pulled down, and those incapacitated were run through. An easy battle, it practically wasn't one at all.

"Galahad," Arthur's voice was shaky, as was his hand as it rested upon his shoulder as Galahad cleaned his blade.

Galahad turned to look at his commander but his words seem to have dried up. Instead they just shared a curt nod. There were no words that would explain what had happened here and what it meant to them all.

In the end, Arthur continued, "Go, sleep. In the morning we will see what remains."

Galahad nodded, knowing even as he walked away, that Arthur would not sleep tonight. He would continue to watch and wait, to see them all safe. And Galahad would have stayed too, if not for the exhaustion he felt deep in his bones.

It was the exhaustion that claimed him as he reached the edge of the crops and moved towards the barracks. And then he stumbled, having to lean heavily against the wall to steady himself.

He hadn't even noticed Tristan until the man pushed under his arm and took his weight.

"Come, Pup. It's a wonder you aren't dead." Tristan's words were sternly rumbled, but there was a note of affection there that he hadn't tried to hide.

Galahad would normally have protested Tristan babying him, but this wasn't that. And as their bodies pressed together whilst they moved forward, Galahad's heart thundered in his chest and his blood ran hot.

His cheeks burned from the closeness, increasingly so as they went. When they reached his quarters and Tristan set him on his bed, Galahad was glad of the lack of light so that he could hide himself in the near darkness.

"Wait," Galahad's voice broke over the word as he reached out a hand over Tristan's to stop him from lighting the candle at his bedside.

He could make out Tristan's nod and the man walked back towards the door. Galahad ached at the loss. He was surprised when Tristan shut the door gently but remained within.

"Tristan?" Galahad's voice was barely above a whisper.

"If you tell me to go, I shall." Tristan replied.

Galahad let out a shuddering breath and shook his head even though Tristan would surely not see. "Don't go."

Tristan let out a sigh, relief.

And that made Galahad's chest ache all the more.

He could make out from the noise rather than by sight, Tristan stripping down to his underclothes. Dust, mud, blood and more falling to the floor with them. Galahad couldn't help but think how much more there might have been. How much more blood had they not succeeded in their mission.

The thought of it was suddenly overwhelming and Galahad let out a soft wail, tears rolling slowly down his cheeks.

"It's alright, everything's alright." Tristan muttered as he moved forward. A moment later the man was climbing beside Galahad on the bed, and then kissing away his tears.

"I saw a vision. When I touched the Grail." Galahad choked out the words as Tristan began to remove his clothing, taking each layer gently away and dropping it over the side of the bed.

"What did you see?" Tristan's voice was rough and as Galahad's layers shed, he could feel Tristan's hardness against his hip.

"Us. Plenty and happiness. And our souls together in this world and beyond."

Galahad was practically gasping the words as Tristan did not stop at his underclothes. He removed every bit of fabric covering Galahad and then ran his hands over his heated skin. There was so much affection in Tristan's touch that Galahad was unable to hold back more silent tears.

"I saw the same." Tristan replied. "Or an echo of it, it's not so clear now. I saw it when you buried the Grail. I felt the truth of it deep into my bones."

"Tristan," Galahad moaned as Tristan's hand wrapped gently around Galahad's cock and began to stroke.

"All these wasted years we have spent misunderstanding what happened that day at the lake-" Tristan muttered the words next to Galahad's throat as he nuzzled and kissed there.

"I'm sorry, I didn't understand, didn't know-"

"We were children. We cannot blame the children that we were. But it is a shame that the adults we became took so long to speak of it." Tristan sighed the words and began to rut his own clothed groin against Galahad's hip.

"We were idiots," Galahad cursed.

Tristan chuckled, "Perhaps, though I am sure Arthur appreciated us not engaging in this whilst under his command. Think of the times we would have spent fucking when there were other things to do by his command."

Galahad groaned at the words, his hips jerking up into Tristan's hand. Tristan pumped him a few more times before releasing him.

Galahad moaned at the loss as Tristan removed his hand from his cock, and sucked his fingers into his mouth. The moan became louder as Tristan pressed his wet fingers against Galahad's hole.

He had never been touched there before, not by another's hand. He had saved himself for Tristan, remained pure in that way always in the hope of this happening. Though he'd never truly believed that it would.

"Tell me if you need me to stop, little Pup." Tristan spoke gently against his ear and then pressed a finger within him.

"Ah huh," Galahad gasped and squeezed his eyes shut. It was an unusual sensation though not uncomfortable.

Tristan moved his finger gently in and slowly back out, repeating the action a few times to allow Galahad to adjust to it. Galahad's cock had begun to soften a little, all the more when Tristan pulled out and pushed two fingers in. It was tight and raw, and Galahad wasn't sure he wanted to go any further without oils. But he equally didn't want to stop in order to find some.

As Tristan eased back and forth, Galahad relaxed. It felt easier then, less resistance. More pleasurable.

His cock began to fill anew and then.

"Ahh, uhhnnff…" Galahad cried out and his body arched as Tristan twisted his fingers and touched something within him that almost had him coming immediately.

Tristan let out a low chuckle.

"I have longed to have you come undone like this." Tristan growled and then pressed his mouth to Galahad's.

The kiss was passionate and hungry, and his fingers worked Galahad to a frenzy. Pumping in and out of him as he loosened, brushing just enough against his inner pleasure to drive him made and not enough to make him come.

Galahad groaned into the kiss as he pushed a hand between them, wanting to finally feel Tristan after all these years of wanting. He took hold of him through the cloth of his underthings and squeezed his hardness. Galahad whimpered at the sensation of it, he could feel the heat even through the fabric. The hot blood rushing around Tristan just for him.

"Mmff," Tristan grunted and Galahad pulled desperately at the cloth until he was able to reach inside and truly take Tristan in hand.

Galahad sobbed out a moan at the sensation, the velvety heat in his hand as he began to stroke Tristan in the same manner he had stroked himself to thoughts of the man.

Tristan moved slightly, giving Galahad better access.

They writhed together, kissing, Galahad working Tristan's impossibly hard cock, as Tristan pumped his fingers into Galahad.

It was a pleasure he had never felt before, despite all the women he'd had. Because none of them had been Tristan, none of them had filled his heart since childhood. None of them drew his concern as Tristan did every time he ventured ahead to track and stalk and make safe the way for them all.

"Tristan," Galahad gasped, his free hand coming up to clutch at Tristan's shoulder. He held on tight as Tristan fucked into his hand, the same rhythm that he fucked his fingers into Galahad's hole.

Tristan grunted and tensed and then he pressed his fingers deep and moved them so very strategically.

It took a moment for Galahad to realise that the cry came from him as his body convulsed with the unexpected climax. His cock spurted hot ropes of come up his chest without even being touched. It took him a moment longer, as Tristan made two last stuttering thrusts into Galahad's fist, to feel the wetness of Tristan's seed spill over him.

"Oh gods, oh gods," Galahad muttered in wonder, trying to catch his breath. His entire body felt wrung out and yet so perfect. So good.

"Wait," He gripped Tristan's shoulder as he went to move, and Tristan stilled, keeping his fingers inside Galahad a little longer. In fact he was unsure when Tristan removed them, when he undoubtedly cleaned them both up, as he fell almost immediately into a deep and satisfied slumber.

*

In the morning they woke to brilliant sunshine.

Together they rose and relieved themselves in the pot before moving to the window. Outside was nothing but abundance. Crops and fruit trees. The Saxons were but remnants. Galahad wouldn't have believed it if he hadn't seen with his own eyes - their bodies almost composted to nothing and feeding the land. By the evening there wouldn't be enough left for even a small pyre.

It was terrifying, but it was beautiful.

Tristan moved from the window and for a moment Galahad thought he might leave, but instead he circled around and pressed himself behind Galahad. The perfect height for his half hard cock to press into the crease of Galahad's ass.

"I think we have earned a day to ourselves," Tristan rumbled against Galahad's ear.

Galahad breathed out a ragged breath as he nodded.

“Come back to bed. Now you have no longer a need for your purity, I will happily take it from you.”

Galahad laughed. He wasn’t sure that the Grail sought such a purity as that, but even so he was willing to give it up to Tristan. In fact, he very much longed to do so.

Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

A very happy ending

Tristan rolled them both until Galahad was atop him.

He never tired of seeing the young man this way, his face slack with pleasure as he rode Tristan between his strong thighs. Thighs that normally gripped a horse in full charge as he strung and loosed a bow. He was masterful both in control of a horse and of Tristan.

The thought was never lost on Tristan. The knowledge of Galahad's strength and agility. And how he could become gentle and soft under Tristan's touch. Just as Tristan knew he did under Gal's. As they explored each other's scarred flesh, over and over, it was with gentle caresses by hands roughed by battle.

Tristan's mind took him immediately back to their first time together in this way, the first time he slid into Galahad's welcoming body. The first time he had felt those scars, kissed them softly.

It had been the night after they had defeated the saxons. They had spent the day in the steam rooms and baths - one of the few things Tristan would give good credit to the Romans for. Easing out their muscles.

They were left in peace by the Romans and their own brothers. Tristan had no doubt they knew what was between him and Galahad, but they were kind enough to allow them the privacy they had earned.

That extended beyond hours in the baths, where they ended in each other's arms. And then after when they went to Tristan's rooms and he lay Galahad down on his bed, easing his way into him with warmed oil.

It had been perfect. Every time it had been perfect.

"Tris," Galahad gasped, digging his fingers into Tristan's chest as he fucked himself over and over on Tristan's cock. It was this way, more often than not. And Tristan loved the feeling of being used by Gal. Of Galahad needing him so very badly.

With a grunt, Tristan took hold of Galahad's hips and guided the movement, slamming them together all the harder.

Galahad let loose a cry, one that would easily carry through the walls of their thankfully secluded home.

The cries continued with every thrust, every meeting of their bodies. Tristan's own grunts joining the chorus.

"There, there," Galahad groaned as Tristan changed his angle ever so slightly, but enough to make Galahad shudder and arch. "Fuck! There," Galahad screamed and took hold of his own cock. Furiously jerking it a few times as Tristan continued to pump up into him. Until finally, Galahad cried out and came, hot seed spilling over his hand and onto Tristan.

With a grunt, Tristan continued to fuck into Galahad's tightening hole, burying himself over and over until he let out a cry of his own and came deep inside his lover.

His husband, for all intents and purposes.

Galahad collapsed onto him and they breathed together, trying to catch their breaths.

*

Two years had passed since that first night.

That first night when Tristan had considered Galahad his husband. And from that day that was how they had been treated.

He had spent the night gently loving the man he had wanted since they were both little more than children. And then in the morning, they had emerged from their private bliss to an acceptance of those around them. That this was the way things were now, and they were free men. If a few Romans remarked on their heathen ways, they did not do so to their faces.

The Saxons were gone. The ground fertile with their remains. The woads retreated to their lands, a truce with Arthur and the Romans. The Sarmatians were free.

Lancelot left, returning home across the mountains. Gawain took his leave to see more of the country that had been his home for so many years and yet he'd seen so little of. Bors and Vanora had another babe, and made a settled life for themselves within the township by the barracks that had once been their home.

Tristan and Galahad built their own home further into the woods. Not far off from the town and the wall. But enough for the privacy they both desired. And mere minutes from the lake in which they swam as children.

They traded with the town and the Woads. They made a new home for themselves together, a peace in that neither of them had had since leaving their homeland.

"It's warm today," Galahad said as he entered their home, dropping a basket of vegetables on the solid table that Tristan had had him over more than once.

"Is that so?" Tristan replied, not looking up from where he sat sharpening his knife.

"Yes, it really is starting to feel like summer now."

Tristan's lips twitched into a smile, one that made Galahad chuckle.

“Is that so, pup?” Tristan rumbled as he looked up at his husband.

“Yes,” Galahad’s reply was breathless.

“You want to go swimming?” Tristan teased and watched as Galahad’s cheeks reddened.

Once Galahad might have been shy, as well as embarrassed. But instead now he sucked in a breath and released it slowly. The blush still there as Galahad swallowed and began to undo the fastenings of his tunic.

When it slipped to the floor, leaving him naked as the day he was born, he then kicked off his shoes.

Tristan watched the whole time, not breaking eye contact.

Galahad stalked towards him, his hands coming down to the fastenings of Tristan’s tunic, undoing them. He was slow, gentle. Gave enough time for Tristan to say no or pull away.

Which of course he did not.

Instead, Tristan let out a rumble of pleasure as Galahad unbuttoned him and smoothed his hands over Tristan’s furred chest.

Galahad leaned in then, his mouth meeting with Tristan’s in a slow and soft kiss. There was no urgency, and Tristan enjoyed when Galahad was like this.

Galahad only pulled back in order to focus on moving his hands lower and unfastening the rest of Tristan’s clothing. His hand brushed lightly over Tristan’s growing hardness, and the smirk on Galahad’s face betrayed that it was purposeful.

Tristan snatched Galahad’s wrist before he could work his trousers open, muttering softly but with gentle menace, “If you keep that up, I might have to ravage you before we go anywhere.”

Galahad’s mouth twitched into a knowing smile and his hands resumed their work as Tristan loosened his grasp.

“You say that as though it’s a bad thing.” Galahad teased.

Tristan grunted, knowing exactly where this was going. Where it always went when Gal was in one of these moods.

Tristan took hold of his trousers and pulled them down to his thighs, releasing his hardened cock much to Galahad’s obvious delight. With a grin, Galahad turned from him and walked over to the little oil pot beside their bed, slicking his fingers with the liquid as a little splashed into the bowl it sat in. Tristan clenched his jaw as he watched, his heart beginning to thunder.

As Galahad walked back to him, Tristan let the tunic fall from his shoulders and spread his legs enough to allow his erection to stand proud.

“Beautiful,” Galahad breathed the word as he came to Tristan and straddled him, not lowering himself completely down. Instead he leaned in to kiss Tristan as he worked his fingers back and inside himself.

Galahad was always partially prepared these days. They made love enough that he was always somewhat welcoming, even the days when he was a little tighter. But oil eased the way for both of them. And there was something deeply erotic about him fingering himself for Tristan.

Or even better…

Tristan reached behind Galahad and pressed a finger into the oil-slicked passage, alongside Galahad’s own.

Galahad gasped into his mouth and shuddered, losing his balance enough that he sank a little further down onto their fingers. And that resulted in a deep and guttural moan.

Gasping for air, Galahad pulled back from the kiss but then moved his body forward, pulling off of their fingers. Tristan’s hands went to his boy’s hips, and Galahad’s went to Tristan’s cock and shoulder. Steadying himself, he used his cock filled hand to guide Tristan inside him.

They both let out a long moan as Galahad sank slowly down onto him, the wooden chair now creaking under both of them.

Tristan closed his eyes, enjoying the feeling around his cock. That hot, wet and welcoming heat that Galahad had saved for him. There was such perfection in knowing that no man had ever been inside Galahad before him.

“Tris…” Galahad breathed out his name, both his hands on Tristan’s shoulders now, sinking into his flesh and gripping tight. Tristan took a deep breath, knowing what was coming next. And then Galahad moved.

The wood beneath them groaned but held, as it always did, whilst Galahad bounced on Tristan’s cock.

Tristan’s head lolled back as Galahad rode him hard. Doing all the work, taking everything that Tristan had. With his throat exposed, Galahad leaned in and nuzzled at his beard and where it disappeared into exposed flesh. It was so intimate, the way Galahad made him feel. As though he were worshipping Tristan every time they made love like this.

“Tristan…” Galahad moaned and started to falter. He was close, that was clear, but he was also tired.

Tristan moved his hands from Galahad’s hips to wrap around his body. He held him tight, moving his own mouth to Galahad’s throat now as he restricted all his movements. And then Tristan started to fuck up hard into Gal. Pushing gasps and grunts from Galahad with every thrust. Using his grip around the boy to hold him there as he set a punishing pace.

“There, there,” Galahad practically screamed.

“I know,” Tristan growled, hitting that spot again. The one he knew so intimately now that he could find it with cock and fingers and drive Gal mad with pleasure.

Galahad was rocking again, what little leverage remained to him in Tristan’s grasp. It was enough for him to be able to meet each thrust up with his own downward stroke.

Tristan clung to him, his head against the bare flesh of Galahad’s sweat sheened chest. Galahad wrapped himself almost entirely around his husband, keeping them as close as possible. As close as two separate souls could possibly be.

“Please, please,” Gal begged, and Tristan knew what he wanted, what he always wanted.

With a grunt Tristan pushed off from the chair, Galahad’s legs wrapping around his waist as he stumbled the few steps to the wall.

He practically slammed Galahad against the wall, holding him there as he continued to pound into him.

“Oh gods! Please…” Galahad cried out, and Tristan felt the wetness between their bellies as Galahad spilled his own seed.

His muscles gripped around Tristan so tightly that he could barely move. But then three thrusts later, he was spilling himself inside Galahad, his entire body buzzing as though he had been struck by a bolt of lightning.

Tristan rested his head against Galahad’s shoulders as he tried to catch his breath, leaning heavily against the wall in order to stay upright on weak legs. Thankfully, Galahad began to release him, setting his own feet on the ground, though it meant that they slipped apart.

The wet patter of a few drops of come spilling from Galahad to the floor made Gal both smirk and blush. Something that Tristan would never tire of.

“We should definitely go to the lake now,” Galahad purred, still catching his breath.

“Yes,” Tristan murmured his agreement into Galahad’s hair.

And despite the decision having been made, they stood there for a few long minutes holding each other with that same sense of wonder they experienced each and every time they made love.

*

Tristan watched, his eyes focused on the dimples above Galahad’s ass, as he waded out into the water. He didn’t turn back to look at Tristan until he was up to his waist.

“Are you joining me?” Galahad teased.

“Well, now that the view from here is less tantalising…” Tristan teased back and began to wade out after Galahad, who had stopped to wait.

Tristan slipped his hands around Galahad’s waist and down into the water, feeling the growing hardness there.

Galahad hummed and sank back into Tristan’s arms.

“I’ll never tire of this,” Galahad hummed and leaned his head back enough to offer up his mouth, which Tristan gladly took.

The kiss was slow and sensual. It set flames through Tristan’s body in a way he knew it always would, forever more.

They broke apart, panting. And then Galahad turned in his arms, snaking his arms up around Tristan’s neck.

“How different things might have been,” Galahad muttered against Tristan’s lips.

“If I had taken you when we were younger?” Tristan growled.

“When I was still completely pure. Before any other hands had touched me.” Galahad murmured.

“Hmm,” Tristan hummed and pushed his hips forward to meet Galahad’s. “We were children. We would have fumbled through an awkward experience, that likely wouldn’t have been so pleasurable.” Tristan’s tone was light and his words only half meant.

Galahad chuckled, kissing Tristan before pulling back again, “We would have discovered intimacy together. Explored each other with curious innocence.”

“And we would have been useless to Arthur, fearing every moment that we might lose each other in battle.” Tristan retorted the truth. It was different now, for them there were no more fights to be had. But back then, Tristan would like to have said he would have remained stoic and focused if Galahad was in danger on the battlefield, but he knew his own passions enough to know that wouldn’t have been the case.

Galahad’s hands slid up the sides of his face and held him there as he looked deeply into Tristan’s eyes.

“I had that fear regardless.” Galahad said, gently.

“As did I,” Tristan let out his breathless reply and took Galahad’s mouth once more. A devouring and passionate kiss that quickly softened into something expressive of the love and wonder between them.

They were both hard again, time having passed and their intimacy intoxicating.

“I need you,” Tristan murmured against Galahad’s mouth, to which the response was an eager nod.

Barely pulling from each other, they waded back to the bank, falling upon the grass with their feet still in the water.

Galahad rolled to his back, Tristan following his movement and ending between his spread legs.

“My husband,” Tristan growled against Gal’s throat as he positioned himself and slowly slid back inside him.

Galahad hummed with pleasure, enjoying the gentle pace that Tristan set.

As much as Galahad enjoyed using Tristan for their mutual pleasure, it was always clear how much he enjoyed this too. The way that Tristan would be gentle with him. The way he would make love to him slow and ardent, until Gal was crying with pleasure.

Galahad pulled his legs up around Tristan, framing him and taking him deeper as he held his face and looked into his eyes.

“My husband,” Gal replied with an affection that could not be quantified and would know no end.

End Notes

I've pulled in a bit of Arthurian legend for this and then bastardised it as needed. In some tales the grail is a stone, which is what I've gone with. And the guardian is the Fisher King but I've then tried to fit it to the setting of the movie.

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